

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A method for establishing a virtual consultant, comprising the steps of:
 - (a) connecting a server and one or more users;
 - (b) selecting a destination within the server to interact with the one or more users;
 - (c) coupling the one or more users through the server based on the selected destination; and
 - (d) establishing interaction parameters for the one or more users based on the selected destination.
2. A method for establishing a virtual consultant as recited in claim 1, wherein the destinations include a reception area where users can interact using collaborative functions.
3. A method for establishing a virtual consultant as recited in claim 1, wherein the destinations include a virtual library where a user can use resources, consult with a virtual librarian, search for resources and collaborate with one or more other users.
4. A method for establishing a virtual consultant as recited in claim 1, wherein the destinations include an office where a user can consult with a virtual consultant.
5. A method for establishing a virtual consultant as recited in claim 1, wherein the destinations include a virtual lounge where a user can socialize, view a directory of other consultants and view information.
6. A method for establishing a virtual consultant as recited in claim 1, wherein the interaction parameters include support for collaboration.

7. A method for establishing a virtual consultant as recited in claim 1, wherein the interaction parameters include support for bulletin board functions.
8. A method for establishing a virtual consultant as recited in claim 1, wherein the interaction parameters include support for recording a session.
9. A method for establishing a virtual consultant as recited in claim 1, wherein the interaction parameters include support for electronic distribution of consulting materials.
10. An apparatus for establishing a virtual consultant, comprising:
 - (a) logic that connects a server and one or more users;
 - (b) logic that selects a destination within the server to interact with the one or more users;
 - (c) logic that couples the one or more users through the server based on the selected destination; and
 - (d) logic that establishes interaction parameters for the one or more users based on the selected destination.
11. A computer program embodied on a computer-readable medium that establishes a virtual classroom, comprising:
 - (a) a code segment that connects a server and one or more users;
 - (b) a code segment that selects a destination within the server to interact with the one or more users;
 - (c) a code segment that couples the one or more users through the server based on the selected destination; and
 - (d) a code segment that establishes interaction parameters for the one or more users based on the selected destination.
12. A computer program embodied on a computer-readable medium that establishes a virtual classroom as recited in claim 11, wherein the destinations include a reception area where users can interact using collaborative functions.

13. A computer program embodied on a computer-readable medium that establishes a virtual classroom as recited in claim 11, wherein the destinations include a virtual library where a user can use resources, consult with a virtual librarian, search for resources and collaborate with one or more other users.
14. A computer program embodied on a computer-readable medium that establishes a virtual classroom as recited in claim 11, wherein the destinations include an office where a user can consult with a virtual consultant.
15. A computer program embodied on a computer-readable medium that establishes a virtual classroom as recited in claim 11, wherein the destinations include a virtual lounge where a user can socialize, view a directory of other consultants and view information.
16. A computer program embodied on a computer-readable medium that establishes a virtual classroom as recited in claim 11, wherein the interaction parameters include support for collaboration.
17. A computer program embodied on a computer-readable medium that establishes a virtual classroom as recited in claim 11, wherein the interaction parameters include support for bulletin board functions.
18. A computer program embodied on a computer-readable medium that establishes a virtual classroom as recited in claim 11, wherein the interaction parameters include support for recording a session.
19. A computer program embodied on a computer-readable medium that establishes a virtual classroom as recited in claim 11, wherein the interaction parameters include support for electronic distribution of consulting materials.

20. A method for providing one or more virtual instructors, comprising the steps of:
 - (a) connecting a server and one or more users and a first virtual instructor;
 - (b) selecting a destination within the server to interact with the one or more users;
 - (c) coupling the one or more users through the server based on the selected destination;
 - (d) establishing interaction parameters for the one or more users based on the selected destination; and
 - (e) dynamically adding a second virtual instructor.
21. A method for providing one or more virtual instructors as recited in claim 20, wherein the second virtual instructor monitors progress and provides feedback.
22. A method for providing one or more virtual instructors as recited in claim 20, wherein the second virtual instructor is selected by the one or more users.
23. A method for providing one or more virtual instructors as recited in claim 20, wherein the second virtual instructor becomes the principal instructor.
24. A method for providing one or more virtual instructors as recited in claim 20, wherein the second virtual instructor works with the first instructor to instruct the one or more users.
25. A method for providing one or more virtual instructors as recited in claim 20, wherein the second virtual instructor collaborates privately with the first virtual instructor.
26. A method for providing one or more virtual instructors as recited in claim 20, wherein the second virtual instructor leads a breakout session with one or more of the users.

27. A method for establishing a virtual instructor as recited in claim 20, wherein the second virtual instructor is selected by the first virtual instructor.
28. A method for establishing a virtual instructor as recited in claim 20, wherein the interaction parameters include support for electronic distribution of materials from the second virtual instructor.
29. An apparatus for providing one or more virtual instructors, comprising:
 - logic that connects a server and one or more users and a first virtual instructor;
 - (a) logic that selects a destination within the server to interact with the one or more users;
 - (b) logic that couples the one or more users through the server based on the selected destination;
 - (c) logic that establishes interaction parameters for the one or more users based on the selected destination; and
 - (d) logic that dynamically adds a second virtual instructor.
30. A computer program embodied on a computer-readable medium that providing one or more virtual instructors, comprising:
 - (a) code that connects a server and one or more users and a first virtual instructor;
 - (b) code that selects a destination within the server to interact with the one or more users;
 - (c) code that couples the one or more users through the server based on the selected destination;
 - (d) code that establishes interaction parameters for the one or more users based on the selected destination; and .
 - (e) code that dynamically adds a second virtual instructor.
31. A computer program embodied on a computer-readable medium that providing one or more virtual instructors as recited in claim 30, wherein the second virtual instructor monitors progress and provides feedback.

32. A computer program embodied on a computer-readable medium that providing one or more virtual instructors as recited in claim 30, wherein the second virtual instructor is selected by the one or more users.
33. A computer program embodied on a computer-readable medium that providing one or more virtual instructors as recited in claim 30, wherein the second virtual instructor becomes the principal instructor.
34. A computer program embodied on a computer-readable medium that providing one or more virtual instructors as recited in claim 30, wherein the second virtual instructor works with the first instructor to instruct the one or more users.
35. A computer program embodied on a computer-readable medium that providing one or more virtual instructors as recited in claim 30, wherein the second virtual instructor collaborates privately with the first virtual instructor.
36. A computer program embodied on a computer-readable medium that providing one or more virtual instructors as recited in claim 30, wherein the second virtual instructor leads a breakout session with one or more of the users.
37. A computer program embodied on a computer-readable medium that providing one or more virtual instructors as recited in claim 30, wherein the second virtual instructor is selected by the first virtual instructor.
38. A computer program embodied on a computer-readable medium that providing one or more virtual instructors as recited in claim 30, wherein the interaction parameters include support for electronic distribution of materials from the second virtual instructor.

39. A method for establishing a virtual director that coordinates a training session, comprising the steps of
 - (a) initiating a session with a virtual director;
 - (b) prompting a user to enter a response congruent with a goal;
 - (c) receiving the response to the goal;
 - (d) transmitting the response to the virtual director;
 - (e) calculating a level of congruency between the response and a target response designed to achieve the goal under the supervision of the virtual director;
 - (f) providing feedback to the user reflecting the level of congruency to assist the user in achieving the goal; and
 - (g) providing remedial information to assist the user in achieving the goal; wherein at least one of the steps of the method can be executed manually under the supervision of the virtual director.
40. A method for establishing a virtual director that coordinates a training session as recited in claim 39, wherein the user is manually prompted to enter the response congruent with the goal.
41. A method for establishing a virtual director that coordinates a training session as recited in claim 39, wherein the level of congruency is manually calculated.
42. A method for establishing a virtual director that coordinates a training session as recited in claim 39, wherein the feedback to the user is provided manually.
43. A method for establishing a virtual director that coordinates a training session as recited in claim 39, wherein the remedial information to assist the user in achieving the goal is determined manually.
44. A method for establishing a virtual director that coordinates a training session as recited in claim 39, wherein the method is executed on a plurality of servers which are coupled through a computer network.

- (c) a code segment that receives the response to the goal;
 - (d) a code segment that transmits the response to the virtual director;
 - (e) a code segment that calculates a level of congruency between the response and a target response designed to achieve the goal under the supervision of the virtual director;
 - (f) a code segment that provides feedback to the user reflecting the level of congruency to assist the user in achieving the goal; and
 - (g) a code segment that provides remedial information including information from the help engine to assist the user in achieving the goal, wherein at least one of the code segments can be executed manually under the supervision of the virtual director.
50. A computer program embodied on a computer-readable medium that establishes a virtual director that coordinates a training session as recited in claim 49, wherein a user is prompted manually to enter a response congruent with a goal.
51. A computer program embodied on a computer-readable medium that establishes a virtual director that coordinates a training session as recited in claim 49, wherein the level of congruency is calculated manually.
52. A computer program embodied on a computer-readable medium that establishes a virtual director that coordinates a training session as recited in claim 49, wherein the feedback to the user is provided manually.
53. A computer program embodied on a computer-readable medium that establishes a virtual director that coordinates a training session as recited in claim 49, wherein the remedial information to assist the user in achieving the goal is determined manually.
54. A computer program embodied on a computer-readable medium that establishes a virtual director that coordinates a training session as recited in claim 49, wherein the computer program resides on a plurality of servers

which are coupled through a computer network.

55. A computer program embodied on a computer-readable medium that establishes a virtual director that coordinates a training session as recited in claim 54, wherein the computer network supports Internet Protocol (IP).
56. A computer program embodied on a computer-readable medium that establishes a virtual director that coordinates a training session as recited in claim 54, wherein the computer network includes a Local Area Network (LAN).
57. A computer program embodied on a computer-readable medium that establishes a virtual director that coordinates a training session as recited in claim 54, wherein the computer network includes a Wide Area Network (WAN).
58. A method for establishing a virtual classroom, comprising the steps of:
 - (a) connecting a virtual classroom server and one or more students;
 - (b) selecting a presentation type for instructing the one or more students;
 - (c) coupling the one or more students and one or more instructors through the virtual classroom server; and
 - (d) establishing interaction parameters for the one or more students and the one or more instructors.
59. A method for establishing a virtual classroom as recited in claim 58, wherein the presentation type includes at least one of lecture, simulation, media, interactive browsing, slideshow, video or audio.
60. A method for establishing a virtual classroom as recited in claim 58, wherein the interaction parameters are a protocol for interaction that allow only one person to interact with the virtual classroom at a time.
61. A method for establishing a virtual classroom as recited in claim 58, wherein

the interaction parameters are a protocol for interaction that allow a plurality of people to participate in the virtual classroom.

62. A method for establishing a virtual classroom as recited in claim 58, wherein materials are provided for use by the one or more students and one or more teachers in the virtual classroom.
63. A method for establishing a virtual classroom as recited in claim 58, wherein homework materials are provided for use by the one or more students in the virtual classroom.
64. A method for establishing a virtual classroom as recited in claim 58, wherein tests are provided for use by the one or more students.
65. A method for establishing a virtual classroom as recited in claim 58, wherein breakout sessions are provided for the one or more students and one or more teachers in the virtual classroom.
66. A method for establishing a virtual classroom as recited in claim 58, wherein grades are distributed electronically.
67. An apparatus for establishing a virtual classroom, comprising:
 - (a) logic that connects a virtual classroom server and one or more students;
 - (b) logic that selects a presentation type for instructing the one or more students;
 - (c) logic that couples the one or more students and one or more instructors through the virtual classroom server; and
 - (d) logic that establishes interaction parameters for the one or more students and the one or more instructors.
68. A computer program embodied on a computer-readable medium that establishes a virtual classroom, comprising:
 - (a) a code segment that connects a virtual classroom server and one or more students;

- (b) a code segment that selects a presentation type for instructing the one or more students;
 - (c) a code segment that couples the one or more students and one or more instructors through the virtual classroom server; and
 - (d) a code segment that establishes interaction parameters for the one or more students and the one or more instructors.
69. A computer program embodied on a computer-readable medium that establishes a virtual classroom as recited in claim 68, wherein the presentation type includes at least one of lecture, simulation, media, interactive browsing, slideshow, video or audio.
70. A computer program embodied on a computer-readable medium that establishes a virtual classroom as recited in claim 68, wherein the interaction parameters are a protocol for interaction that allow only one person to interact with the virtual classroom at a time.
71. A computer program embodied on a computer-readable medium that establishes a virtual classroom as recited in claim 68, wherein the interaction parameters are a protocol for interaction that allow a plurality of people to participate in the virtual classroom.
72. A computer program embodied on a computer-readable medium that establishes a virtual classroom as recited in claim 68, wherein materials are provided for use by the one or more students and one or more teachers in the virtual classroom.
73. A computer program embodied on a computer-readable medium that establishes a virtual classroom as recited in claim 68, wherein homework materials are provided for use by the one or more students in the virtual classroom.
74. A computer program embodied on a computer-readable medium that

establishes a virtual classroom as recited in claim 68, wherein tests are provided for use by the one or more students.

75. A computer program embodied on a computer-readable medium that establishes a virtual classroom as recited in claim 68, wherein breakout sessions are provided for the one or more students and one or more teachers in the virtual classroom.
76. A computer program embodied on a computer-readable medium that establishes a virtual classroom as recited in claim 68, wherein the virtual classroom is recorded.